

Report on the RNSA supported visit to US Department of Defence's Northern Command (NORTHCOM) of Athol Yates

17 August 2008

Summary

RNSA supported Athol Yates to attend a workshop run by the US Department of Defence's Northern Command (NORTHCOM) in Colorado Springs from 22-24 June 2008.

The purpose of the event was to explore the concept of developing an international Centre of Excellence in Homeland Defence.

The outcome was agreement on the need for the centre, and a further meeting on 20-21 October 2008 to develop the concept further.

The benefit for RNSA and Australian researchers, industry and government of such an international Centre of Excellence in Homeland Defence is that it would provide opportunity to formally engage with the US and other military interested in homeland defence technology and research.

Reason for the support

The travel was supported by the RNSA because it contributed to the RNSA mission statement of *facilitating a knowledge-sharing network for research organisations, government and the private sector*.

A number of excellent contacts were made between the participants and speakers which have been passed onto RNSA including contacts at:

- Counter Terrorism, Ministry of Defence, UK
- Defence Force Command, Singapore
- Defense Threat Reduction Agency
- Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies
- Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Department of Homeland Security
- Center for Homeland Security, UCCS
- Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies

Outcomes

By being involved in the event, Athol Yates was able to highlight Australian researchers and capabilities in areas relevant to homeland defence which included:

- Cyberspace Security
- Pandemic Influenza
- Special Security Events
- Information Sharing
- Disaster Relief Challenges and Best Practices

In addition, the following initiatives were proposed:

- Production of a book of edited papers with the US Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies on homeland defence
- Production of a text book on critical infrastructure protection involving Edith Cowen and the University of Colorado

Finally, Athol Yates has been invited back to be involved in the next workshop on the international Centre on 20-21 October 2008. As part of this, it is proposed that he will develop a brochure highlighting the capability of researchers and industry in areas of homeland defence.